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[Despatch Abstract.]

Selection of Text Books for Schools

Coming to the L. P. S. resolution of the Govt of
India on the subject of the ———,
& requesting the Director to report ~~and~~
what steps should be taken to bring
the Constitution & working of the Indian
Text Book Committee into accord
with the principles laid down by
the Govt of India.

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G.O., No. 94, 1st March 1900.

MARCH.

Selection of Text-books for Schools.

Communicating to the Director of Public Instruction resolution of the Government of India on the subject of the —, and requesting the Director to report what steps should be taken to bring the constitution and working of the Madras Text-book Committee into accord with the principles laid down by the Government of India.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following paper:—

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Education), dated Calcutta, the 8th February 1900, No. 64—74.

Read—

Circular letter to Local Governments and Administrations, No. 153—62, dated the 23rd March 1899, asking for full reports on the system under which text-books are prescribed for all classes of schools and colleges and the constitution and powers of Text-book Committees.

Read also—

The replies of Local Governments to the above Circular.

Resolution—The principles which should be followed in the selection of text-books in schools were affirmed by the Government of India several years ago. An investigation into the manner in which these principles have been followed in practice has satisfied the Governor-General in Council that the directions of the Government of India have not unfrequently been ignored or contravened, and that it is desirable to issue fresh instructions based on those laid down in the past and to take steps to ensure that these are strictly carried into practice. In the present orders the Government of India propose to confine themselves to a consideration of the question as it affects primary and secondary schools and the lower classes of high schools which are not engaged in the study of text-books prescribed for the University Examinations. Before proceeding to state the principles that should be followed in selecting text-books for schools of this character, the Government of India think it desirable to give a brief account of the manner in which the existing orders on the subject originated.

2. After considering, in communication with Local Governments and Administrations, the recommendations of a Committee appointed in 1877 to inquire into the system of prescribing school books and to devise a complete scheme for general observance, the Government of India in the Home Department Resolution No. 3—13, dated 10th January 1881, issued instructions as to the manner in which text-books should be selected. The principles then formulated were—

- (1) that Provincial series of English and vernacular text-books should be maintained in preference to a single Imperial series;
- (2) that the preparation and maintenance of the series of text-books for each Province should be left to the Local Governments assisted by Standing Committees, of which it was contemplated that the Directors of Public Instruction should be *ex-officio* Presidents;
- (3) that these Committees should contain a fair intermixture of independent members whose choice of books could not be set down to professional or departmental bias;
- (4) that the Committees of the different Provinces should communicate with one another in order that each might benefit by the experience of the others;
- (5) that aided schools need not be restricted to the use of text-books authorized for Government institutions.

3. The Education Commission were instructed to inquire what practical steps were being taken to give effect to these orders in the case of both Government and aided institutions. The Commission (paragraph 388 of their report) limited the number of their recommendations on the subject of text-books because they did not consider it necessary to repeat the principles affirmed by the Government of India in 1881. They noticed, however, that the orders of 1881 had been imperfectly carried out in respect of the inclusion of independent members on the Standing Committees and the interchange of information between the Committees of different Provinces. They accordingly recommended that the Committees should include qualified persons of different sections of the community not connected with the department, and that the Text-book Committees of the different Provinces should act, as far as possible, in concert and should communicate to each other lists of English text-books and (in the case of those Provinces which have any common language) of vernacular text-books which are satisfactory and lists of books which they consider to be wanting or inadequate. The few remaining recommendations of the Commission of a general character in regard to text-books referred to subjects not dealt with in the Resolution of the Government of India of 10th January 1881. It is only necessary here to refer to one of these recommendations, viz., that to the effect that care should be taken to avoid, as far as possible, text-books which are of an aggressive character or likely to give unnecessary offence to any section of the community.

In approving these recommendations the Government of India stated that they attached much importance to the work of Text-book Committees, and that the whole question of text-books as discussed by the Education Commission in paragraphs 375—388 of their report was deserving of the special attention of Local Governments.

The Government of India have not, since they approved the recommendations of the Education Commission, issued any further general instructions regarding the selection of text-books.

4. The information which has recently come before the Government of India in response to an inquiry as to the manner in which the system of selecting text-books has been working shows that the cardinal principles, laid down by the Supreme Government in 1881 and re-affirmed in the report of the Education Commission and the orders upon it, have in some Provinces been gradually allowed to fall into disuse until the existing practice has ceased to conform to the directions of the Government of India. The result is that there is an absence of uniformity in the principles which regulate the selection of text-books in different parts of British India, and that in some Provinces the functions of the Local Government as the final authority by which text-books should be prescribed have been abdicated either in favour of the Educational Department or of the Text-book Committee.

5. The question of the constitution of the Committees may be first referred to. The Government of India contemplated that the President of the Committee in each Province should be the Director of Public Instruction, and that among those associated with him there should be a certain number of independent gentlemen. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the Punjab, Burma, the Central Provinces, and Assam, the Director is the President of the Committee. In Madras the President of the Committee is a Professor at a private college. In Bengal there are three Committees. The Central Committee is presided over by a Judge of the High Court, and the Behar and Orissa Committees by non-officials. In the Hyderabad Assigned Districts there is no Committee at all. In Bombay there is no Committee for the examination of books in secondary schools. There are four Divisional Committees (the Kanarese, Guzarati, Marathi, and Sindhi Committees) for the examination of books used in primary schools, each presided over by an Inspector of Schools.

The Committees vary very much in size and constitution. In Madras there are 31 members, of whom 20 are Europeans and 10 are in the employment of Government. The Central Committee in Bengal consists of 24 members, of whom 5 are Europeans and 19 natives of India. Fourteen members of it are Government servants mostly in the Education Department. The Behar Committee is composed of 31 natives and 2 Europeans and contains 20 Government servants. The Orissa Committee

contains 5 Europeans and 11 natives, of whom 12 of its members are Government servants. In the Bombay Presidency the members of the Committees vary from 6 to 13, and the majority are native officers of the Education Department. In Burma there is a Committee of 7 (5 Europeans), of whom 4 are in Government service. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, there are 40 members of the Committee, of whom half belong to it *ex-officio*. The remainder are annually appointed: 5 by the Director of Public Instruction, 5 by the Missionary Education Union, and 10 by the Local Government. In the Punjab the Committee consists of 30 members, half appointed by Government and half by the University. In the Central Provinces the Committee numbers 20, of whom 18 are appointed *ex-officio* and 12 are Government servants. In Assam there are 10 members of the Committee for selecting books in Assamese, of whom 2 are Government servants. The text-books in English and Bengali must be selected from the list prepared for the use of schools in Bengal.

6. The functions of the Committees are almost as varied as their constitution. The detachment of the Committees from the control of the Educational Department and the Local Government is most marked in Bengal. Text-books are furnished direct to the Committees in that Province by Publishers and Authors. The Committees approve the text-books in secondary and primary schools, and the Director annually revises the list of text-books in accordance with their recommendations. The English and Bengali books on the list are used in Assam as well as in Bengal. In the Madras Presidency books are referred to the Committee by the Director of Public Instruction after a preliminary examination into their typography, paper, and general get-up. Those which are recommended by the Committee are, after the Director's approval, notified in the Gazette. In the Bombay Presidency the Director of Public Instruction refers vernacular books, after examination by the Educational Translator, to the Divisional Committees. The Committees report to the Director, who decides whether a particular book shall or shall not be approved. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh the Committee are empowered to select school books for all vernacular and anglo-vernacular schools. The selection is subject to the confirmation of the Director, who keeps the Local Government informed of his decision. Books about which the Committee have not been consulted are sometimes prescribed by the Education Department with the approval of Government. In the Punjab the Committee merely recommend text-books; the Educational Department prescribes them. In the Central Provinces the Committee work in subordination to the Inspector-General of Education. In Burma the functions of the Committee are for the most part confined to the selection, preparation and submission for approval of vernacular text-books, and the translations of English text-books already selected. They are sometimes asked to report on the merits of the text-books in English which it is proposed to adopt.

7. The orders as to the obligation of the Managers and Headmasters of schools to use only prescribed books are different in different Provinces. In Madras the text-books in use in recognized schools are ordinarily selected from the list of approved books, but hitherto Headmasters and Managers of schools have not been absolutely restricted to the use of such books. In Bombay the selection of text-books published in England is left largely to the Managers and Headmasters of both Government and aided schools. The Director of Public Instruction published a list of such books in 1894. The only condition now imposed is that no book not included in that list shall be introduced into a school without the consent of the Circle Inspector. The use of English books published in India has to be sanctioned by the Director. With the exceptions that Mission schools are allowed to use their own readers subject to the approval of the department, and that books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu are examined by special experts, both Government and aided schools are restricted to the use of vernacular text-books recommended by the Committee and approved by the Director. The Central Committee in Bengal have not published a list of books for use in the high schools. A list is issued by each Inspector. Government schools within the circle are required to use only books entered in the list. Managers of aided schools usually follow this list, though they are not compelled to do so. In setting the course of reading for the different scholarship examinations in primary and secondary schools,

the Director of Public Instruction prescribes books from the list approved by the Committee. The Managers and Headmasters of aided as well as Government schools are required to select any other books used in their schools from this list. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh no school in receipt of State aid can use any book for class instruction which has not been sanctioned by the Director; in the neighbouring Province of the Punjab text-books are prescribed for Government and Local Board schools only, and all other schools are absolutely free to choose their own books. In the Central Provinces the rules make no provision for the use of approved text-books only. Text-books prescribed by the Inspector-General of Education are used in all schools managed by the department, and apparently also in schools managed by Local Bodies. In Burma the only text-books the use of which is compulsory, besides those prescribed for students reading for the University examinations, are those sanctioned by the Local Government for the standards of examination in schools and for the teachers' certificate examination.

8. The orders of the Government of India issued in 1881, while leaving matters of detail to the Local Governments, contemplated that uniformity should be observed in regard to the general principles for the selection of text-books. The account which is given above of the orders now in force shows that this essential object has not been attained under the present system. The Governor-General in Council has now determined that no time should be lost in bringing the system of selecting text-books into accord with the principles which were laid down long ago, and which he now desires to re-affirm. But before doing so, he wishes to record his cordial and emphatic appreciation of the great assistance which the Provincial Text-book Committees have, for so many years past, rendered to the cause of education. The fact that the original basis upon which these institutions were constituted has in some respects been lost sight of, in no way detracts from the value of their labours—labours which have in the majority of cases been prompted solely by a sense of public duty.

9. In the first place, His Excellency in Council desires that the position of the Text-book Committees towards the Educational Department and the Local Governments and Administrations shall for the future be more precisely defined. It was never intended that these Committees should themselves prescribe the text-books to be adopted in schools. Their functions should be strictly limited to advising the Local Governments and Administrations. The ultimate decision as to the text-books which are to be prescribed or approved must rest with the Local Government or Administration, and all lists of authorized text-books should be periodically published under the authority of the Local Government in the official Gazette. It appears to the Government of India that there is a danger, if Committees are required to examine any text-book which may be brought to their notice from any source whatever, that the duty of recommending text-books may fall into the hands of a few members who may have more leisure than the rest. In order to prevent the possibility of this result, it would, the Government of India think, be desirable to make it a standing rule that no text-book shall be referred to a Committee until it has been forwarded to the Director of Public Instruction, and found, after a preliminary examination under his orders, to be a work upon which the opinion of the Committee ought to be taken. An arrangement of this nature will prevent the Committees from being, as has been the case in at least one instance, overwhelmed with applications for the examination of books which they find themselves incapable of properly examining.

10. Secondly, with regard to the constitution of the Text-book Committees, the Governor-General in Council wishes to lay it down that it should be an invariable rule that the Director of Public Instruction should be the President of the Provincial Committee. In Provinces in which, owing to there being more than one vernacular in ordinary use, Sub-Committees have to be appointed to deal with text-books in each vernacular, an Inspector of the Educational Department should be either President or Secretary. Many of the Committees now in existence are, in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, too large for the purpose for which they are intended. In the opinion of His Excellency in Council, a Provincial Committee of 20, in addition to the President, ought to be sufficiently comprehensive to secure the proper representation of all classes interested in the matter in even the largest

Provinces. When a Sub-Committee has to be appointed, it should ordinarily not consist of more than 5 members in addition to the President. The Government of India do not suggest that Local Governments and Administrations should at once proceed to reduce the Committees to this size, but they do desire to press upon them the need for taking action in this direction as vacancies occur upon the existing boards. Some of the Committees now in existence are, in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, not satisfactorily constituted as regards their *personnel*. The intention of the Government of India was that there should be on each Committee a fair admixture of independent members. This direction has been in some Provinces construed too liberally, with the result that the interests which Government represents are not sufficiently protected; sometimes because the non-official members of the Committee are too numerous, and sometimes because the official element consists mainly of subordinate members of the Educational service whose influence is not sufficiently strong to secure the adequate consideration of those interests. In some Provinces, again, the constitution of the Committees gives inadequate representation to some classes of the community. In the opinion of the Government of India, it is essential to arrange that the Committees shall be so constituted as, firstly, to secure that the proportion of non-official members to the representatives of Government shall not be unduly large; and, secondly, that different interests shall be properly represented. It should not be difficult to procure the services in many cases of competent officers of Government who, though perhaps not members of the Educational service, can be relied on to take an earnest interest in the proceedings and objects of the Committee, and to facilitate the end for which the Committee has been called into existence, *viz.*, that only text-books to which no exception can be taken shall be prescribed in schools for the tuition in which the State is either directly or indirectly responsible. In this respect the Government of India cannot consent to divest itself of the responsibility that attaches both to its interest and to its prerogatives. If it is to lend the resources of the State to the support of certain schools, it cannot abrogate its right to a powerful voice in the determination of the course of studies which is there imparted. Otherwise its responsibility ceases to be any more a name.

11. The Text-book Committee of 1877 recommended that the Committees should draw up a list of suitable books divided into two classes—the first class comprising books which might be used both in Government and in aided schools, and the second comprising books which, though not prescribed for use in Government schools, might be used in aided schools. It has already been mentioned that the Government of India, in passing orders on this report, determined that there was no necessity to restrict aided schools to the use of text-books authorized for Government institutions, but separate lists of text-books—the one for State, and the other for aided schools—have not been prepared. As a matter of practice, the text-books included in the lists framed on the advice of the Text-book Committees have, as stated in paragraph 7 of this Resolution, been in most Provinces used in aided as well as in Government schools. In the opinion of the Government of India, it should be definitely laid down that no books not authorized by the Local Government or Administration should be used in any school which receives support from public revenues. In the schools maintained by the Government or by Local Bodies a large list of text-books is not required. The course of instruction in each class of school should be laid down and the text-books for each particular course absolutely prescribed. In the case of aided schools a wider choice is required, and care should be taken that the authorized lists are so framed as to afford it. But the Managers of such schools should, as a condition of receiving a grant-in-aid from Government, be required to adopt no text-book which is not included in the list of text-books authorized by the Local Government without the sanction of the Local Government. The Government of India entertain no doubt that if the Manager of an aided school wishes to adopt a text-book not included in the authorized list, the Local Government will give every facility to have the book referred to the Text-book Committee with a view to its inclusion under the orders of Government in that list should it be found to be a suitable work. The functions of the State do not extend to the prescription of the text-books in unaided schools. But the Government has a direct interest in the course of instruction in schools which do not seek its aid financially, and, in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council,

the condition may fairly be made that candidates from an unaided school are liable to be excluded from any public examination, for passing which a certificate is given, or from competition for a Government scholarship if text-books which are disapproved by Government are in use at the school in question. Lastly, it appears to the Government of India that the Local Government in each Province and the Government of India should retain the right of prescribing a text-book on a particular subject for use in all schools, whether Government or aided, within a Province, or in British India generally. This power would be exercised only in exceptional circumstances, but it is, in the opinion of the Government of India, essential to retain it. As instances of the kind of works for which this exceptional power is required, the Governor-General in Council would refer to the Sanitary Primer written by Dr. Cunningham, which was prescribed for all schools in 1879, and that written by Dr. Roberts which was prescribed in 1891.

12. In order that the Government of India may be kept informed of the manner in which the principles now prescribed for adoption in regard to text-books in schools are carried out by the different Local Governments and Administrations, it will be convenient that draft rules embodying them should be prepared by each Local Government and forwarded to the Government of India for information, and that each Director of Public Instruction should in his annual report describe the manner in which the rules are carried out in practice.

Order—Ordered, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to all Local Governments and Administrations for information and necessary action.

Ordered also, that a copy of the Resolution be published in the *Supplement to the Gazette of India*.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. P. HEWETT,
Secretary to the Government of India.

To the Government of Madras.

ORDER—No. 94, Educational, dated 1st March 1900.

Communicated to the Director of Public Instruction, who will be requested to report as early as possible what steps should now be taken to bring the constitution and working of the Text-book Committee into accord with the orders of the Government of India. Draft revised rules should also be submitted for approval.

(True Extract.)

H. TREMENHEERE,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

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 21-2-00
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